

# Coating of Oil At Waconda Bay From CF Plant

By DICK KOPPER

A "sheen" of oil covered much of Waconda Bay Tuesday — apparently because a Highway 58 chemical manufacturer was forced to use an emergency cooling system — but a state water quality control official said the consequences were "fairly minor." 7-28-76 p.15

Charles Steele of the Tennessee Department of Public Health's water quality control division here said the oil release has caused no loss of fish or water fowl life in the bay.

"The main problem is esthetic. The boaters and the water skiers don't like it, and I don't blame them," said Steele.

Steele explained that the release occurred after CF Industries, a Highway 58 chemical and fertilizer manufacturer, experienced a breakdown in its water cooling tower and had to turn to a backup system in which water is taken from Lake Chickamauga, run through the plant and then dumped into the bay.

The state water quality official said it is not clear just how the oil got into the water discharge, which was released through drainage facilities at the neighboring Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant.

Steele said that part of the oil was apparently picked up from an oil reclamation area at CF but that neither he nor CF officials believe that oil could account for all of the release.

As of late Tuesday, Steele said, it appeared that no more oil was flowing into the bay.

"The bay has had about all the oil it's going to get, and it should improve from now on," said Steele.

Steele said that both he and the commander at VAAP had given CF permission to use the back-up cooling procedure.

CF Industries plant manager Jim Dickerson explained that ordinarily CF circulates water needed for cooling in its manufacturing processes through a cooling tower at the plant.

But Monday, Dickerson said, a fan blade in the cooling tower flew off, doing about \$250,000 in damage to the tower, rendering it inoperable, and forcing CF to resort to the back-up, "once through" water cooling procedure.

Dickerson said he hopes to have the cooling tower repaired in about 20 days.

Steele said the higher flow caused by the release from CF plus storm conditions on Waconda Bay Tuesday appeared to be breaking up the oil sheen. The state water quality control said a three-man TVA crew had hoped to deploy a boom apparatus to contain the oil but was prevented from doing so by Tuesday's storm.

Steele said George Moein, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official from Atlanta, was on the scene Tuesday.

The state water quality official said that because of past pollution in Waconda Bay, "there just aren't fish there to kill at the moment," and he said that at this time of the year no wild waterfowl ordinarily are found on the bay.

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